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KITH AND KIN IN INDIA.

No. III.

CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM.

BY THE

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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

BY THE

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CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM.

THERE is a well-known hyperbole of Paul's, and a tremendous one, which stands as evidence that his patriotic concern for his Jewish kindred was apt to gather to a passion. He "could wish," he writes (Romans ix. 3), "that he himself were anathema from Christ for the sake of" his own countrymen, his "brethren," his "kinsmen according to the flesh;"—this man, to whom "to live was Christ," and to whom "to die was far better" than to live, because it was more of Christ.

And all the while, let us remember, the heart of Paul was as large as the known world, and his earnest good-wishes were as wide as the human race.

This remarkable utterance of his has principles wrapt up in it, therefore, which are worth our unfolding.

I. The widest Christian well-wishing *acknowledges the kindredhood of race.*

The relationships which providence has set in the

heart of human existence, widening and weakening as they do from that of the family to that of humanity universal, are all of them valid, and all of them fraught with moral obligation. Midway among these is the relationship of country. This relationship is Divinely intended to have its own sentiments and its own duties. Nationality is not a mere human fiction, but a thing of providential meaning and mercifulness, fitting itself to the working-out of the general interests of mankind. Patriotism was never abolished nor even discredited by Christianity; rather, Christianity has hallowed and employed patriotism, and owes more to this sentiment, though it is apt to be a limiting one, than men commonly imagine.

From Paul's day till now, the most patriotic of men have been those who had regard to all men for Christ's sake, and the most largely Christian of men have been the most patriotic of men. It has been so in Britain. It is to the most earnestly Christian of the men and women of the past that our own country owes nearly everything, as a country of whose history and liberties and world-wide power we have some reason to be proud. And, to-day, the most Christian man among us may have the proudest affection for his country. His own land: his eye

rests with pleasure upon the spot on the map which it makes, and kindles with emotion when it catches sight of the headlands of its storied coast after months or years of unrest among scenes which some may esteem more fair. His own country's flag: he hails its homely features like the smiling face of a friend wherever he sees it waving to him from some mast-head upon the lone ocean, or fluttering at leisure on the breeze upon some strange shore that our countrymen have won. His own country's tongue, the tongue of his fathers, the speech he learned on his mother's hearth, he finds imperishable in the best of literatures: his ear greets its accents when he hears them in some strange-speaking region, and they go to his heart like the song of a bird of home. His own fellow-countrymen: they may not always be what they ought to be, they may not always bring us honour, they may not always live as becomes their birth and privileges; but he remembers they are Britons, and his heart warms at the thought that our national history is theirs, and our national institutions are theirs, and our national land is theirs. After all, they are his "brethren," his "kinsmen according to the flesh," wherever he meets them, or wherever he knows them to be.

So the Christian man may feel, and may have the

approval of his Lord upon the feeling. He who "made of one blood all nations of men," but did not make of one nation all the world of men, expects the feeling, and makes provision for its outflow. It does not bound the sympathies of a man ; it only fosters them at a middle point, and gives them order and rank and practicable field. Patriotic affection need not narrow a Christian heart—not more than domestic affection does. A man's sympathies ought to be domestic and more, patriotic and more. And just as we would have the best reason for despising the Christian philanthropy of a man whose heart was too great to trouble itself about the paltry circle of his own household, so Christians had need to beware how they throw off the sentiment of national brotherhood in the imagined interests of Christian or universal brotherhood. The interests of Christian brotherhood have found, by long experience, that the Christian brotherhood which seeks expansion by this means is a brotherhood which has great need of expansion by all means—needs first to get the length of a true Christian patriotism itself, that by-and-by it may have the chance of perhaps getting beyond it. It will get beyond it by keeping it the nearer to its heart, and by having it as one of the inner circles of those concentric areas by which

Christian affections spread themselves out over Christ's world.

For here comes in a grave consideration. The man who is shedding off his patriotic sentiment, or declining it, is shirking patriotic duty, or refusing it. The sentiment may go, but the duty abides. The sentiment, rather, is the duty in its gaseous state, asking to be condensed by conscience, and set to solid work by will. A man is my fellow-countryman: that man, wherever he be, has more claim upon me and upon what I can do for him, other things being anything like equal, than a man of any other country has. If we have got out of the feeling of this, we have not got above it, but below it. And patriotic duty needs the aid of patriotic feeling. The sentiment may go: yes, but it takes with it the God-provided motive which makes the duty easy, and the discharge of it both rich and true. That Christianity is weak, and is probably spurious, which deliberately dispenses with anything in which a hint of duty is.

It lies near to the singular greatness of our destiny as a nation among the nations of history, that many of our countrymen reside in regions far beyond our own shores. Tens of thousands of them are sojourners here or there within the vast boundaries

of our Indian Empire—sojourners, yet perhaps for half a lifetime. Thousands of these are not only cut off from the associations of home-life, but are severed from the surroundings of Christian civilisation. They are our countrymen still: their isolation, the mere sprinkling that they are among the dense masses of the native people, even accentuates their kindredhood. They are more to us than the men and women of those swarthy millions among whom they are dispersed: they have more claim upon us than they. Is it extravagant to suggest, that our first duty is to them, and our second to the natives of the land? I never was chargeable with the heartless whim of despising Asiatic blood; for this, I think, is to demoralise patriotism. It leaves me the more free to disown the sentimentality which sets the native of India before the British resident in India. I do not speak of Indian administration, but of the interest which the men of the one race and of the other ought to have for British hearts, and of the claim which the men of the one race and the other naturally bring upon our practical benevolence. These Anglo-Indian men and women are of us still; no new nationality has absorbed them: better or worse, most of them will be with us again. They are exiles, and many of them in trying circumstances

—not physically only, but morally too. The absent children of a household, if they are shut off from good and kindly influences, are not those who have least of the household interest. The absent sons and daughters of Britain in India, if they are shut off from good and kindly influences, are not those for whom we in Britain should care little.

II. The widest Christian well-wishing *concentrates its interest upon the religious welfare of kindred.*

That interest could not be other than in great part a religious one. The well-wishing is itself a product of the religion of religions, the religion of Christ. It springs from religion, and it would shrivel up if religion were to exhale away. All this is according to reason. If a soul has gotten its sympathies widened thus, it largely owes that widening to a supernatural amendment of its powers of vision. And one thing which it now sees very impressively is this—that spiritual concernments transcend all others, as the heavens transcend the earth.

Keep your eye, then, upon a large-hearted Christian of good sense and good intelligence, and you will note that his interest, across all the widening circles of its range, is still above all a religious interest,

strengthening inwards from circumference to centre. To him the supreme wellbeing is religious wellbeing; the supreme prosperity of his countrymen is their spiritual prosperity.

The welfare of our scattered countrymen in India is a thing of many aspects. It is a thing that may awaken interest in the breast of every man who wishes his country and his countrymen well. Their social comfort, their moral integrity, the strength of their influence over the subject races, their mercantile good-fortune, their professional success, their intellectual wellbeing—all these are matters which touch our interest, as we think of those men and women who are dispersed in groups or units through the length and breadth of that tropical empire. But the more we think of those fellow-countrymen of ours, and the more we know of them, the better we will apprehend, that what claims our interest in them above all things is their religious welfare. This would be so, even if there were nothing very exceptional in their religious circumstances. But there is much that is exceptional in these. Unspiritual influences beset them on every side. An unchristian atmosphere is around them; people of anti-Christian religions abound as 1000 to 1; there is scarcely such a thing as a Christian public

sentiment within reach of them ; temptations, made strong by the unhomely nature of their life, lie in wait for them ; the exigencies of the climate encourage irregularity of habit, and discourage all earnestness beyond what is demanded by the urgent affairs of secular life.

Now, all this is serious enough for spiritual welfare when the ordinances of grace and the ministries of Christian counsel are at hand. What is it, then, when they are far away—perhaps never seen from monsoon to monsoon and from year to year ? These are our "kinsmen according to the flesh," and their spiritual welfare, we may assure ourselves, is hard bestead, or is in the utmost jeopardy. They are no mythical needs that the Anglo-Indian Evangelisation Society sets itself so patriotically to meet, when it does all in its power to bring the outlying districts of India under some Gospel oversight. We might keep before us the simple certainty, that the Society would wholly meet those needs if the interest of Christians at home were an interest in the best welfare of our fellow-countrymen in India such as the interest of this Society for twenty-five years has been.

III. The widest Christian well-wishing is *ready to make sacrifices for the religious welfare of kindred.*

It would be unwise to expect that any of us will ever be aflame with the magnificent unselfishness that glowed in the heart of Paul. But it is really this which is Christianity. Something of this we ought to look for in each other, and to demand in ourselves. At the least, something of it might be expected to reach out as far as to embrace the spiritual wellbeing of our Indian fellow-countrymen. A deplorably large proportion of these, most of them young and promising and well-trained, are being lost to Christianity and to good, or are thirsting for privileges which it would be right blessed to be able to give them. And we could give them these. A little sacrifice, in the line of Christian goodwill and patriotic sentiment welded into one—a little liberality, a great way short of recklessness, on the part of a few thousand Christians in this privilege-pampered land—and the thing is achieved. But what is the fact? The Society and its workers are making sacrifices, and the Christian community is supporting them with some £1500 a-year! If we were to multiply this by ten, might not the happy results go some way to comfort us for all we should endure by the effort?

There is a thought which I think is fitted to hearten us in sacrificing a little more generously for the objects of this Society. The Indian races,

more remotely, are our fellow-countrymen too. We are responsible for the religious welfare of native India. Now, the Christian who does anything to strengthen this Society does something to strengthen the hands of every agency which is working to gain India for Christ. Ask the missionaries, from Simla to Ceylon and from the North-West Provinces to Burmah, what special hindrance to their work is the most painful and disheartening, if not even the most powerful, and they will tell you it is the unchristian life and the anti-religious spirit of British residents among the native people. Ask them, on the other hand, what is the greatest comfort and the strongest stay they have amid their arduous labours, next to the grace of God, and they may tell you it is the manly sympathy, and the blameless life, and the striking Christian demeanour, of right-hearted men and women who are not of the missionary brotherhood. It is the great object of the Society to diminish the first of these classes, and to increase the second.

All this being so, one does not wonder that the fastest friends of the Society have been found among those who knew India best, and that these have numbered not a few of the greatest of her recent administrators.

Anglo-Indian Evangelisation Society.

NOTES BY THE REV. J. FORDYCE.

I. The Rev. J. Kerr Bain, M.A., was the first minister of the Rangoon Presbyterian Church. After five years or more of very efficient service he returned to Scotland; but he continues to feel deeply for our countrymen in the far East. He has readily done deputation work for the Society in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Inverness. At my request he has placed one of his sermons at the disposal of the Society; and he has condensed it into the admirable plea here published for a far-reaching Christian patriotism.

II. More than a quarter of a century ago I went to India as the Society's Commissioner, blending the duties for fourteen years of Evangelist, Secretary, Surveyor, and Superintendent, whilst pastor of the Simla Union Church during successive hot seasons. For nearly eleven years I have been in the service of the Society at home as Secretary and Treasurer. A review of what I have seen in extensive tours in India, and two visits to Burmah, deepens my

impressions, twenty-five years old, of the great importance of this Society's work both for our countrymen in India, and the vast native population in the midst of whom they ought to be, but often are not, living illustrations of the Religion of Christ.

III. For years I was alone. Mr. Bain was the first to follow. Rangoon, like Simla, was self-sustaining and more. From Rangoon occasional help was sent for evangelistic work. Simla Christians helped the Society very largely; and still a few residents there give aid, whilst not a few from Simla, now in Britain, and one in Ireland, are regular contributors to its funds.

IV. During these twenty-five years nearly fifty evangelists have been employed in India for periods varying from a few months to fourteen years. Belonging to seven churches, they have preached the one glorious Gospel of free grace, and there have been seals of their ministry south, north, east, and west.

V. In 1874, when I was at home, the "Winter Mission" was begun, on the suggestion of the late Lady Kinnaird, and the late Dr. Somerville began his marvellous work as a "Modern Apostle," by a six months' tour in India with his son, now a physician in Glasgow. Others followed, the late Rev. C. Melville Pym, the late Rev. Donaldson Rose, &c. The Society has not been able to sustain the continuity of

the Winter Mission, but others have taken up the work, more than we can name, including Mr. George Müller, Lord Radstock, Dr. Pentecost; last winter the Rev. J. Gelson Gregson, and the Rev. John M'Neill. The Rev. Edgar U. Thwaites, Rector of Fishergate, Salisbury, who spent a winter lately in India, is now organizing a "*Special Winter Mission.*" Though chiefly for natives, some work will be done among our Kith and Kin.

VI. Being now in my seventy-seventh year, and unequal to the work required, I have resigned my two-fold office. The Directors and many friends of the Society have made generous provision for my remaining days, *or years if the Lord will.* As a Member of the London Committee I hope still to serve the Society.

VII. The Directors have appointed the Rev. D. C. Boyd, M.A., as my successor. Mr. Boyd is well-known in Western India and in Scotland as an able and evangelical minister, and as having a variety of gifts for special service. He needs no introduction from me, but I cannot but express the hope that he may retain the co-operation of the helpers of the past, and greatly deepen and extend an interest in the Anglo-Indian Dispersion, and specially in those who are as sheep having no shepherd.

Brighton, 1*st July*, 1895.

Having left Cambridge, some friends may wish to know my Brighton address. At present it is 2 Chesham Street, but this may be altered. Letters addressed Rev. John Fordyce, Brighton, will find me. I believe there is only one other minister of the same name in the United Kingdom and the Colonies, and he is at the Antipodes in Sydney!

J. F.

Letters and remittances may be sent to the Rev. D. C. Boyd, M.A., at 5 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh, or 11 Albion Street, Glasgow. Letters to 7 Adam Street, Strand, London, W.C., will also reach Mr. Boyd; but the other addresses are more direct, especially the second.

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